



WILDERNESS WATCHER

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Thirty-Two Million Wilderness Acres Along Northern Border at Risk From Border Security Measures

By George Nickas and Kevin Proescholdt



Cabinet Mountains Wilderness, Montana by Steve Boutcher; Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Minnesota by Kevin Proescholdt; Joseph Battell Wilderness, Vermont by Ken Norden: three of more than 70 Wildernesses threatened by border security measures.

In a new analysis, Wilderness Watch has identified 73 U.S. Wildernesses, covering more than 32 million acres across 12 states, that are threatened by a variety of border security measures along the Northern Border with Canada. The threatened areas stretch from Maine in the east, westward to Minnesota and Montana, on to Washington on the west coast, and north to Alaska.

The 22-page report, “Wilderness in Peril: Border Security Measures Threaten Wilderness Along the Northern Border with Canada,” documents threats from a variety of sources, including legislation sponsored by Rep. Rob Bishop (R-UT) and passed by the House of Representatives, which would waive federal laws within 100 miles of both the Northern Border as well as the border with Mexico. This legislation could still pass in the lame-duck session of Congress. If it doesn’t pass then, it will likely be re-introduced next year.

But flying under the radar, and potentially having far greater impact on Wildernesses, are actions by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its agencies like Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Border Patrol. These agencies are seeking to replicate at the Northern Border much of the infrastructure, construction, and motorized patrols used on the border with Mexico.

A 2012 Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) and a flawed 2006 inter-agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) allow these agencies to damage Wildernesses along the Northern Border. The PEIS would allow the same heavy-handed tactics as occur along the border of Mexico, such as border wall construction, infrastructure development (like

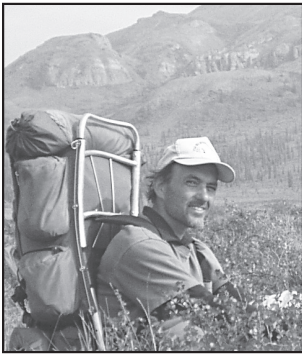
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...and More

message from the Executive Director



As I write we're just a few weeks from the end of a remarkable year for Wilderness and Wilderness Watch. And by the time this newsletter gets to you, the "lame duck" session of Congress will be over and we'll know if the Wilderness system escaped Congressional shenanigans. More about that in a moment.

First, the good news. As you may know, this year we had the good fortune to add Kevin Proescholdt to our staff. Kevin is a leading wilderness expert and has long been affiliated with WW as a board member and activist. Kevin is keeping an eye on several issues affecting the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota and other Wildernesses in the upper Midwest, while expanding our involvement in national policies. Our recently released report detailing the emerging threat from border security operations in Wildernesses along our border with Canada is just one example of the kind of issues we are now better positioned to pursue.

The good news didn't stop there. During 2012 our on-line newsletter, the *Guardian*, reached more than 100,000 subscribers, and we grew our membership by 20 percent. Kudos to Dawn and Jeff for exceeding our goals on both of these fronts. And throughout the summer we had our first legal intern on staff. Talasi Brooks provided invaluable help to the staff and the *pro bono* attorneys handling Wilderness Watch's litigation.

For each success we owe you a big "Thank you!" We would not have achieved the successes that were the hallmark of the year without your generous support. Now we're moving into 2013 with the strongest organization we've ever had. Thank you so much for helping make that happen.

Now, back to what keeps us up at night praying for the 112th Congress to end. We've been fighting much of the year to stop two bills passed by the House of Representatives that would devastate Wilderness. The so-called "Bishop Border Bill" (H.R. 1505) would waive 16 environmental laws, including the Wilderness Act, on all public lands within 100 miles of any U.S. Border. It would allow the Department of Homeland Security unfettered access for motorized patrols, building roads and other border security infrastructure within Wilderness. So far the Senate has refused to act on the bill, but last-minute deal cutting or adding unrelated items like this bill to other must-pass legislation remains a real threat.

The other House-passed bill taking aim at Wilderness is the Sportsmen's Heritage Act (H.R. 4089), whose provisions would effectively repeal the Wilderness Act. It would eliminate the prohibitions on the use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, aircraft, structures and installations for any hunting, angling, or wildlife conservation-related activity. The bill would also permit an unlimited array of ecological manipulations—from logging, chaining, poisoning, damming—in the name of wildlife "conservation." No more "untrammelled by man" to be sure! The bill passed the House by a wide margin. The Senate is debating a different version of the bill, one without the Wilderness Act-destroying provisions. Should this bill pass the Senate there will likely be a negotiation to resolve the differences between the two bills and the Wilderness Act could wind up back in the sights.

By the time you read this we should know the outcome. Here's to a happy holiday season and a wonderful 2013, with the Wilderness Act intact! 🐾

—George Nickas



The Wilderness Watcher is the quarterly newsletter of Wilderness Watch, America's leading conservation organization dedicated solely to protecting the lands and waters in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

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Wilderness in Congress

As the *Watcher* goes to print, the following bills remain alive during the lame duck session in Congress. Some of them remain actively in the mix of negotiations and could still see action before the lame duck session ends.

Sportsmen's Heritage Act (H.R. 4089)

This House bill would gut the 1964 Wilderness Act and remove protections for every Wilderness in the nation. The bill passed the House of Representatives in April, promoted heavily by the National Rifle Association and the Safari Club. Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT) has his own version of the Sportsmen's Heritage Act (S. 3525) that does not include the bad wilderness language from H.R. 4089. Should Tester's bill pass the Senate, the House bill's bad wilderness provisions could still come into play in negotiations over the two bills.

Bishop Border Bill (H.R. 1505/2578)

Rep. Rob Bishop (R-UT) saw his border security bill, originally H.R. 1505, passed by the entire House in June as part of an omnibus public lands bill, H.R. 2578. His bill would waive 16 federal laws (including the 1964 Wilderness Act, the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA], etc.) within 100 miles of the U.S. borders with Mexico and Canada in order to give the Department of Homeland Security virtually unlimited power to achieve "operational control" of the borders. The larger bill that now includes the Bishop Bill contains more than a dozen other bad public lands bills.

BWCAW Land Exchange Bill (H.R. 5544)

In September, Rep. Chip Cravaack's (R-MN) H.R. 5544 passed the House of Representatives mandating a land exchange for the state-owned school trust lands within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) in Minnesota. His bill would waive environmental review and public comment under NEPA


and transform a large chunk of Superior National Forest outside the BWCAW to a less-protected status. His bill is widely viewed as an effort to develop new copper-nickel mines in sulfide-bearing ore outside the Wilderness.

These new mines will inevitably lower water quality within the Wilderness. The good news is that, so far, no Senate companion bill has been introduced, and Cravaack was defeated for reelection. Yet there is still a lot of political pressure in Minnesota to advance the measure.

Green Mountain Lookout Bill (H.R. 6039)

Rep. Rick Larsen (D-WA) introduced this bill last June to overturn a court decision to remove a newly-constructed replica lookout on Green Mountain in the Glacier Peak Wilderness in Washington. Wilderness Watch won a federal district court order telling the U.S. Forest Service to remove this new structure from the wilderness summit. No hearings have yet been held on the Larsen bill. No Senate companion bill has yet been introduced, and Washington State redistricting has recently excluded Green Mountain from Rep. Larsen's district.

Perils of an Omnibus

While some organizations are urging Congress to pass a public lands omnibus bill during the lame duck session, Wilderness Watch remains extremely skeptical of such a measure. Though there are some good wilderness bills that deserve to pass and would likely be part of any omnibus bill, the bad bills described above and many others not mentioned would almost certainly be included in any omnibus in order for the bill to pass the anti-wilderness House. Wilderness Watch believes that the perils of an omnibus in this lame duck session significantly outweigh the benefits that might be achieved by such a bill. Little or nothing will be lost by not passing a bill at this time, and the good wilderness bills can be pursued in the next session of Congress. 

Wilderness Watch Member Receptions

Benefit for Minnesota/Great Lakes Office

On October 11th, Wilderness Watch hit the road to Minneapolis. Members Rick Duncan and Beth Goodpaster generously opened their home to Wilderness Watch and hosted a reception to benefit our new Minnesota/Great Lakes office. Executive Director George Nickas and Conservation Director Kevin Proescholdt welcomed the 35 or so guests, shared news

about the work of Wilderness Watch, and everyone had a fun time as well. We raised some needed funds, brought in 19 new members to the organization, and built up awareness of and good will for the organization, wilderness management, and Wilderness Watch's role in advocating for it. Thanks particularly to Rick and Beth for their generosity in hosting the successful event!

Member Receptions continued on page 4

Wilderness in the Courts

Wilderness Watch continues to pursue a number of important cases in federal court. Below is a description of the most recent case we filed, and an update on a decision recently handed down on another case.

Fish stocking challenged:

Wilderness Watch has filed suit in federal court challenging the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) program of dumping fish and other effluents in Wilderness



lakes in northern California. The lakes where the fish are dumped are naturally fishless. The suit alleges the “fish stocking” program violates the Clean Water Act (CWA) and seeks to prevent the agency from stocking the lakes unless and until it obtains the permits required by the CWA.

Putting fish in naturally fishless lakes has been shown to dramatically impair natural aquatic ecosystems, altering food webs and

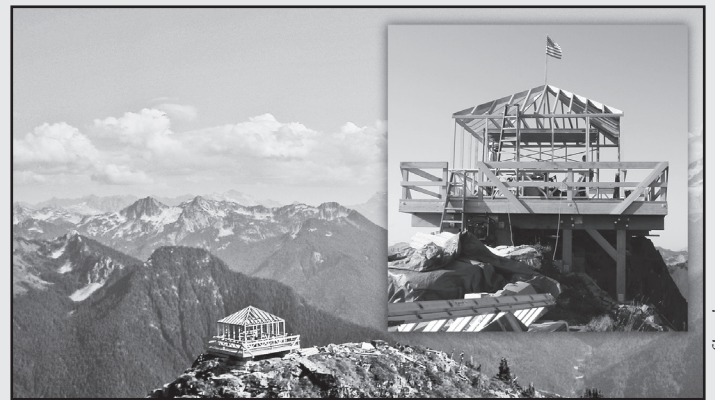
the relative abundance of native organisms. Unfortunately, the Forest Service has chosen to ignore its wilderness stewardship responsibilities and let the State run roughshod over these wilderness ecosystems.

The fish that Fish and Game stocks are biological materials that are a pollutant under the Clean Water Act, which prohibits discharging pollution without first obtaining a permit. We believe that once the fish stocking program is forced to undergo environmental and legal scrutiny it will likely be significantly, if not entirely, curtailed.

Wilderness Watch is joined in the lawsuit by Felice Pace, a local resident and long-time wilderness advocate. We are represented by Julia Olson of Wild Earth Advocates.

Judge revises Green Mountain lookout order:

At the request of the Forest Service, a federal judge has amended his order requiring the agency to immediately remove its unlawfully constructed Green Mountain lookout from the Glacier Peak Wilderness in Washington. Judge Coughenour instead remanded the case to the Forest Service to fashion its own remedy consistent with the court’s finding that constructing the replica lookout violated the Wilderness Act. Remanding cases to the responsible agency is a common practice, though usually the action challenged hasn’t yet occurred so the “fix” is to modify the proposed project or correct deficiencies in the analysis.



ww file photo

In remanding the decision the court noted, “The options available to the Forest Service on remand seem limited. However, after reviewing Defendants’ additional briefing on the topic of remand and the authorities cited therein, the Court is persuaded that the Forest Service should be afforded the opportunity to determine how to move forward in light of the Court’s invalidation of its actions.”

Wilderness Watch will continue to monitor the agency’s progress on removing the lookout. It’s unfortunate the Forest Service has opted to waste even more of its wilderness budget on this ill-advised project, but that won’t affect our resolve to see the Wilderness restored. 🌀

Wilderness Watch Member Receptions (continued from page 3)

Stewart Brandborg Headlines Missoula Meeting

On November 29 at a local members’ holiday party in Missoula, Montana, 40 people got a chance to hear Stewart Brandborg, Wilderness Watch’s longtime board member and now Senior Advisor. “Brandy” was the protégé and successor of Howard Zahniser, the author of the Wilderness Act, at the Wilderness Society. “I don’t think there’s any national organization, other

than Wilderness Watch, that’s doing a damn thing for wilderness,” he began. He then told us how the Act took eight years of concentrated effort, with public hearings, negotiations, and finally a 1964 vote with only one dissenting vote in the House and 12 in the Senate. Brandy said everyone needs to get the fire going in his/her belly. “Who’s ready to sign up to defend Wilderness?” he challenged. 🌀

surveillance towers), and motorized patrols. The MOU seems to erroneously assume that Wildernesses along the Northern Border end 60 feet shy of the international boundary, whereas in fact the wilderness boundaries go right up to the border.

Even more insidiously, under the hastily passed REAL ID Act the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security can unilaterally waive any law, with no prior consultation with Congress or the federal land-management agencies, and with no ability for citizens to seek recourse in the courts. Congress should never have put so much power in the hands of a single, unelected bureaucrat, and Congress must put that power back where it belongs—in the hands of elected officials and the public. Former DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff used this authority to waive dozens of federal laws, like the 1964 Wilderness Act, in 2008 along the border with Mexico.

Wilderness Watch believes that our nation must protect our Wildernesses along the Northern Border, and that this can be done while still keeping our country safe. Our new report suggests several ways to accomplish this goal, including the following:

- 1.) repeal the dictatorial power of the Secretary of DHS to unilaterally waive federal laws,
- 2.) correct the flaws in the 2006 agency MOU,

- 3.) revise DHS's Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Northern Border to safeguard Wilderness,
- 4.) defeat pending legislation like the Bishop Border Bill that would harm Wilderness, and
- 5.) reestablish wilderness protection along the border as a national priority.

Under the hastily passed REAL ID Act [the Secretary of DHS] can unilaterally waive any law, with no prior consultation with Congress or the federal land-management agencies, and with no ability for citizens to seek recourse in the courts.

The threatened Wildernesses within 100 miles of the Canadian border include some of America's most well-known and loved: the Pemigewasset Wilderness in New Hampshire, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota, the Bob Marshall Wilderness in Montana, the Olympic Wilderness and the Stephen Mather Wilderness in Washington state, and iconic Wildernesses in Alaska like those in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, Glacier Bay National Park, and Misty Fjords National Monument.

Wilderness Watch urges our members and the public to read the new report and advocate for actions to protect our Wildernesses along the Northern Border from damage. Downloaded the report at: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/Wilderness_Watch_Northern_Border_Paper.pdf 🌿

On the Road—WW Has a Superior Meeting

On September 12th, Wilderness Watch conservation director Kevin Proescholdt met with the new Supervisor of the Superior National Forest, Brenda Halter, and her staff in Duluth, Minnesota. The meeting touched on several wilderness stewardship issues affecting the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). These issues included the proposed South Fowl snowmobile trail, commercial towboat operation within the BWCAW, and border security measures and impacts. The meeting went very well, with good discus-

sion and questions and answers back and forth. A hydrologist by training, Supervisor Halter most recently worked in the Chief's Office in Washington, DC, on the agency's travel management planning rule. Earlier, on the Chippewa National Forest in Minnesota, she worked on the Forest Plan Revision team for both the Chippewa and Superior National Forests. Ms. Halter replaces Jim Sanders, who retired in December 2011 after 16 years as the Superior's Supervisor. 🌿

On the Watch

Drakes Estero Finally Becoming Wilderness



Photo: Bill Ingersoll

In a notable victory for Wilderness and the public interest, Drakes Estero has finally been added to the Phillip Burton Wilderness in Point Reyes National Seashore in California, as promised to the American people nearly 40 years ago. Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar decided to uphold the 1976 Point Reyes Wilderness Act and announced at the end of November that the operating permit for a commercial oyster farm will expire, the operation will be closed down, and the area protected as Wilderness as Congress intended so long ago. Wilderness Watch had been working with the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin and other groups to garner public support for the area's protection. We especially ramped up our efforts when special interests prevailed in convincing political leaders led by Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) to stop the permit from automatically expiring, and legislation was passed that put the decision to protect Drakes Estero

and the Phillip Burton Wilderness in Sec. Salazar's hands. The public, by a vast majority, spoke in favor of wilderness protection. We thank everyone who took action to help make this happen. For more information on this issue, please see our website: www.wildernesswatch.org/issues/index.html#PhillipBurton 🌿

Mining Threatens Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness



Photo: WW files

Wilderness Watch is sounding the alarm about a Forest Service (FS) proposal that would allow gold mining exploration in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness (FC-RONR) in Idaho. The proposed work involves four miles of road construction, up to 771 vehicle trips per year, and the use of large motorized equipment, including D-8 cats, dump trucks, and flatbed trucks. All of it in Wilderness. The area is part of the famed Middle Fork of the Salmon River drainage, with the Golden Hand mining claims located between 6,800 and 7,600 feet in elevation near the headwaters of Coin Creek. Lynx, wolverines, wolves, boreal owls, bull trout, and steelhead live here. The claims have considerable history. The FS found them invalid in the 1980s. The claimant challenged this assertion and judges ruled that some were valid, others invalid. Eventually, the federal district

court held that most claims were valid even with little research to prove validity.

WW and Friends of the Clearwater's comments noted the following:

- The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) fails to propose an action alternative that would adequately protect the wilderness character of the FC-RONR. The DEIS's two action alternatives are nearly identical as both allow road building, heavy equipment use, and hundreds of vehicle trips each year.
- The DEIS fails to propose an action alternative that does not involve the use of motorized equipment. Drilling is the major exploration activity and that can be done with small non-motorized equipment. Other exploration work in Wilderness has been conducted this way.
- The DEIS fails the National Environmental Policy Act by not providing a range of alternatives.
- The scope of the development is far too great for initial prospecting or even more advanced exploration, which this appears to be.
- The DEIS fails to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in terms of water quality, soils, and fisheries analysis.
- The DEIS is unclear on impacts to roadless areas.

Our comments can be downloaded at our website: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/WWComments_GoldenHand.pdf 🌿

Road Denial in Upper Kiamichi Sets Strong Precedent



Photo: U.S. Forest Service

The Forest Service (FS) has made a good decision to protect Wilderness by denying motorized access to a private inholding in the Upper Kiamichi Wilderness in Oklahoma. The owner sought to build a road to the 160-acre parcel in order to build a structure there. The FS denied the request citing the road's long-term impacts to the area's wilderness character. Local and regional forest officials deserve kudos for taking a stand against motorized access and making a decision that will serve as a strong precedent for the thousands of small parcels of non-federal land interspersed throughout the National Wilderness Preservation System. You can download the decision at our website: [www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/Upper Kiamichi access.pdf](http://www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/Upper_Kiamichi_access.pdf) 🌀

Stopped in Their Tracks

After learning that an off-road vehicle website was promoting a ride through the Pecos Wilderness in northern New Mexico, Wilderness Watch and the Center for Biological Diversity urged the U.S. Forest Service (FS) to step up patrols in the area. Upon learning of the proposed ride, the agency did just that. A FS law enforcement officer met the off-roaders at the trailhead to ensure they didn't drive into the Wilderness. The planned ride was apparently a protest of sorts to a recently released FS travel plan that closes some existing roads and trails in the area to motor vehicle use. 🌀

Minnesota's Haze Plan Not Good Enough



Photo: Kevin Proescholdt

The federal Clean Air Act classifies the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) and Voyageurs National Park in Minnesota as Class I areas, which receive the highest protection under this law. The Clean Air Act also requires states to control regional haze. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) submitted a plan, which failed to require new pollution control equipment for taconite plants (part of the iron mining industry). Two plants (Minntac and Utac) had been identified as the largest contributors to haze over the BWCAW and Voyageurs. A coalition of environmental organizations objected and argued for a better plan to protect these Class I areas from haze. The federal Environmental Protection Agency agreed in August, rejecting MPCA's regional haze plan for the taconite facilities and issuing a federal plan instead. 🌀

Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Inholding Protected

In a victory for Wilderness, the Forest Service (FS) has decided to acquire a 33-acre inholding in the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness (ABW) in Montana in exchange for about 22 acres of federal land in the Gallatin National Forest. The FS exchange will prevent mining on the land. Wilderness Watch supported removing this inholding from the ABW to protect Wilderness, wildlife, and the public interest in general. You can download the decision at our website: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/Pine_Creek_Land_Exchange.pdf 🌀

Death Valley Wilderness Plan Needs Strengthening



Photo: Bill Cunningham

Wilderness Watch recently joined Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) in voicing concerns over the National Park Service's (NPS) Draft Wilderness Management Plan for Death Valley National Park in California. Death Valley contains more wilderness than any other area of the national park system outside Alaska. We let the NPS know we support Alternative B—the Minimum Action Alternative—as the best way to preserve and manage Death Valley Wilderness. In our comments we noted several problems with the draft, which we asked the NPS to fix. These included: misstating the Wilderness Act with regards to minimum requirement exceptions, questions about the right-of-way upon which a commercially owned communication tower sits and about road corridor widths, and concerns with condoning motor vehicle use related to native rights. We also encouraged the NPS to consider the requirements of the Wilderness Act as well as recent case law as it considers the future of five water containment structures for wildlife (“guzzlers”) in the Wilderness. Our comments can be downloaded at our website: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/Death_Valley_WildernessPlanEA_comments_9-27-12.pdf 🌀

Addressing Wilderness Grazing

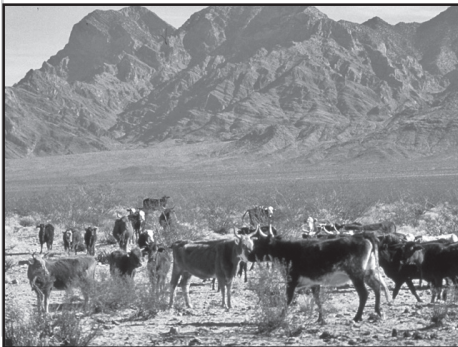


Photo: George Wuerthner

Wilderness Watch has joined with a number of other organizations around the country that are working to reduce the impacts of grazing on Wilderness and other federal public lands. We are supporting the Rural Economic Vitalization Act (H.R. 3432) sponsored by Rep. Adam Smith (WA-9), which allows grazing permits on public lands to be voluntarily retired. We urge you to sign a petition asking Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) to sponsor a companion bill in the Senate: <http://www.change.org/petitions/senator-maria-cantwell-sponsor-the-rural-economic-vitalization-act>. You can read WW's policy on grazing in Wilderness on our website: www.wilderness-watch.org/issues/guide.html#14 🌀

An Election Wrap-Up

Six billion dollars spent. President Obama re-elected. Republicans control the House. Democrats the Senate. Did the elections change anything for Wilderness and our public lands?

Looking purely at the numbers, the answer would have to be “not much.” There will be something on the order of eight more Democrats in the 435-member House of Representatives, and two more in the 100-seat Senate. Not enough to meaningfully affect the outcome of votes or the make-up of public land committees in either body. But looking beyond the numbers, there are a few changes and possible shake-ups of note. Rumors have it Presi-

dent Obama's second term will have a new Secretary of Interior overseeing the vast majority of America's public lands. Obama's current secretary, Ken Salazar, was an unpopular choice for environmental activists outside the Beltway. Wilderness Watch will be joining with many of our colleagues urging the President to appoint a strong public lands advocate to this important position.

On the Congressional front, wilderness advocates have a couple of things to celebrate.

One of the most promising outcomes is the return of former Congressman Rick Nolan of Minnesota to the House

Learning from WW's Two Decades of Experience Protecting Wilderness

By Talasi Brooks



This past summer, in an opportunity co-funded by Wilderness Watch's Bill Worf Memorial Scholarship and the Wyss Foundation, I worked as a legal intern for Wilderness Watch. As a former wilderness employee for the U.S. Forest Service—and current Environmental

Studies graduate student and Law student at the University of Montana—this was a great opportunity to put my experience and education to use for a cause I believe in. In addition, I was fortunate to work with Wilderness Watch's staff, whose skills, experience, dedication, and knowledge were a tremendous resource.

My internship gave me experience in a number of areas of environmental advocacy. I wrote an opinion piece for *High Country News* to draw attention to the Sportsmen's Heritage Act—a bill that would be disastrous for Wilderness. I also wrote Freedom of Information Act requests, drafted comments on proposed agency projects, wrote and participated in an Administrative Appeal of a decision to replace a dilapidated bathhouse in the West Chichagof/Yakobi Wilderness in Alaska, and helped with litigation of the Fred Burr dam maintenance project in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. I was given the freedom to take the reins on many of these projects; but my work also received extensive and searching review. Working with George Nickas to make sure my work accurately and sufficiently represented Wilderness Watch's

position on these issues was hugely valuable and taught me a lot about the Wilderness Act.

I have been able to carry my summer internship experience into my current work now that the school year has started. I focused a legal research project I am using to satisfy a requirement for both of my Masters programs on a Wilderness Act legal issue I identified through my work this summer. A recent presentation I gave on that project was a huge success. In addition, I will be a panelist, along with the legal counsel representing Wilderness Watch in the Fred Burr litigation, at the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference in Eugene, Oregon, next February. The panel will discuss an emerging issue in wilderness law that plays into the Fred Burr case—the issuance of “Ditch Bill” easements to operators of wilderness dams, arguably expanding the motorized and mechanized uses permissible for dam maintenance.

My experience at Wilderness Watch was invaluable and I hope to continue being involved with this work. As a member of Wilderness Watch, I am thrilled that my contributions support an effective organization with a strong wilderness ethic. The work Wilderness Watch does is critical—this organization is truly on the cutting edge of wilderness issues. The Wilderness Watch staff—George, Dawn, Jeff, and Kevin—are truly committed to preserving wilderness and to advocating on its behalf. We are fortunate to have such skilled advocates working to ensure responsible wilderness management and agency accountability. I am proud to support them in ensuring implementation of the Wilderness Act remains true to the spirit that inspired Howard Zahniser, Bill Worf, and countless others to devote their lives and work to wilderness preservation. 🌿

An Election Wrap-Up continued

of Representatives. Nolan, who will represent the area that includes the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, was a champion of the Boundary Waters when he served in Congress during the 1970s. During the battles to pass the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act, Nolan was a co-sponsor of the so-called “Fraser bill”, which would have permanently banned all motorboat use in the Boundary Waters. During this recent campaign his opponent, Congressman Chip Cravaack, assailed Nolan for his support of the Boundary Waters in the 1970s. Though Nolan's district includes some of the most ardent Wilderness opponents in the State, Nolan didn't back

down and described his support for the Boundary Waters as one of his proudest achievements.

For his part, Cravaack recently pushed through the House a land exchange bill that would remove federal ownership from a large chunk of the Superior National Forest on the edge of the Boundary Waters making it available to multi-national mining companies for open pit copper and nickel mines. Wilderness Watch has been working to stop that bill, and we look forward to working with Congressman Nolan on efforts to provide greater protections for the Boundary Waters.

Election Wrap-Up continued on page 10

Bob Binger Dies at Age 93

By Kevin Proescholdt

Charles Robert Binger, a life-long wilderness explorer and one of the most generous supporters of Wilderness Watch, died at his home in Dellwood, Minnesota, on August 14. Bob was nearly 94 years old.

Bob had a deep love of Wilderness, starting in 1931 when he attended YMCA Camp Widjiwagen at the edge of what is now the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) in northeastern Minnesota. Later, during his college years, Bob guided canoe trips for “Widji” in the BWCAW during the summers of 1936 to 1939. Unlike today, few people traveled the area. He sometimes took groups on the Hunters Island loop up into adjoining Quetico Provincial Park, a trip that would last 22 days.

Bob recalled that once, while finishing one long canoe trip, he was met at the landing at the tiny town of Winton by the camp director. Plans had changed, and the director needed Bob to turn around and head out immediately with another group of campers, with no time off between trips. But Bob didn't mind too much. He relished his experiences in the wilderness.

Bob's interest in the outdoors led him to undergraduate and graduate degrees in forestry and a successful business career with the Minnesota and Ontario Paper Company from 1946 to 1968, and with Northern Pacific Railroad from 1968 to 1981. But Wilderness continued to influence his life. While working in northern Minnesota, Bob became good friends with Ernest Oberholtzer, a founder

of the Wilderness Society and a renowned wilderness explorer in his own right. From 1965 to 1970, Bob made five long sled trips with the nomadic Inuit people in the Canadian Arctic and came away with a deep appreciation for both the Arctic wilderness and the resourceful Inuit who lived there. Bob was later elected to the Explorers Club of New York in recognition of those trips.



Bob Binger traveling with the nomadic Inuit at Bathurst Inlet, Northwest Territories, circa 1966

While working for Northern Pacific, Bob met a Forest Service officer named Bill Worf, with whom he worked on land exchanges. The two became fast friends, in part because each shared a deep commitment to Wilderness. After Bill retired from the Forest Service, he helped found Wilderness Watch in 1989, and Bob quickly became a member and supporter. Bob continued his generous support of Wilderness Watch for the rest of his life. On their last visit together at Bob's home in 2009, the

two discovered that, though they had known each other for decades, they hadn't realized until then that both had served at the Battle of Iwo Jima during World War II.

Bob was a kind, unassuming, and generous person. I first had the chance to know Bob when he served on my board of directors for the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness in the 1990s. In recent years I enjoyed frequent visits at Bob's home, where we shared books, often dealing with wilderness or exploration, and talked about Wilderness and wilderness conservation. I'll miss our visits, but I'm very happy for our shared love of Wilderness, our friendship, and for his life well lived. ❧

An Election Wrap-Up continued from page 9

On another potentially promising note, a redistricting change in the State of Washington removed the Glacier Peak Wilderness from the district represented by Rep. Rick Larsen. Wilderness advocates will recall that Rep. Larsen is pushing a bill to permit the Forest Service to retain its illegally constructed replica lookout/visitor center atop Green Mountain inside the Glacier Peak Wilderness. Wilderness Watch challenged the construction and recently won a lawsuit ordering the building be removed. Assuming Larsen's bill fails to pass in the lame duck session, we're hopeful we can work with Congresswoman-elect Suzan DelBene to let the Court's ruling stand and protect the Wilderness.

Of the many retirements in the House and Senate, one stands out for its possible implications for Wilderness. Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), long-time chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and stalwart Wilderness defender, is retiring after 30 years in the Senate. In his role as committee chair, Bingaman has advocated for Wilderness while acting as a goalie to block many of the wilderness-damaging provisions that have been part of several wilderness bills in recent years. His office has always been open and honest with Wilderness Watch and our allies. Bingaman's role in protecting Wilderness will truly be missed. ❧

Maybe You've Had This Experience

By Jeff Smith




You're two days deep into wilderness, with two good friends, and pushing deeper still. Your conversations have become more sparing. Your senses, especially your vision and your smell, astonish you. You find yourself stopping more, breathing deeply the meadow above the creek where you saw the moose tracks, the way the cumulous clouds move behind the sandstone bluffs at the mouth of the canyon, the deep blue where the creek you've been following plunges into the lake.

It's an oxymoron, but you really do begin to hear the silence. You don't need no stinking cell phone, car, laptop, appointment book, new refrigerator. You understand what the philosophers meant when they said wilderness is home.

If you're like me, you can summon these memories of wilderness when you need them. Crystal clear, they are part of you, a time when you were exactly where you needed to be, standing at the edge of the universe.

When you support Wilderness Watch, you are preserving these experiences in these extraordinary, increasingly rare places. Our goal is to make sure these places are wild for our grandchildren, and their grandchildren.

You have probably received our end-of-the-year appeal in the mail, so close your eyes to summon that special cache of wilderness memories and be as generous as you can be. Thank you. 

LOVE THE WILDERNESS? Help Us Keep It Wild!

Yes! I would like to make a contribution and help defend Wilderness!

Here is an extra donation to help protect Wilderness!

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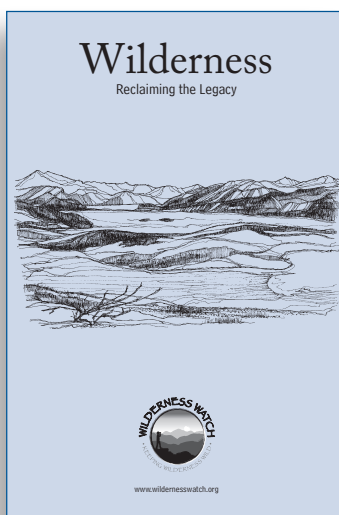
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Wilderness: Reclaiming the Legacy



America's National Wilderness Preservation System began in the unprecedented clarity of the 1964 Wilderness Act, sometimes described as nature's Bill of Rights. Wilderness Watch is pleased to offer a collection of essays and articles entitled, "Wilderness: Reclaiming the Legacy," where we reset the conversation back to the Act's prime directive: to maintain and enhance the wilderness character of these rare and intact landscapes. The authors have all served distinguished roles in wilderness protection, from working to pass the Wilderness Act and writing the regulations and policies to implement the law, to advocating for properly protecting Wilderness, in the court and on the ground. All of these voices are laser-sharp defenders of Wilderness and, like you, key supporters of our work. Download the table of contents from our website: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/Anthology_TOC.pdf

To order your copy of "Wilderness: Reclaiming the Legacy," (\$5 for members; \$10 for non-members; special rates available for bulk purchases), please contact Jeff Smith, WW's Membership and Development Director: jsmith@wildernesswatch.org or 406.542.2048 x1. 

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